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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000017

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON  
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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: MFA U/S MUTRIF SIDDIQ DISCUSSES USG AIRLIFTS,  
EMBASSY SECURITY

REF: KHARTOUM 10

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a January 6 meeting with CDA Fernandez and DLO, MFA Undersecretary Muttriff Siddiq stated that the GOS has given its initial approval for a USG military airlift of UNAMID equipment, but requires the USG to provide the final flight details and liaise with UNAMID. Coordination with UNAMID and a submission of flight details was also required to facilitate a USG-funded airlift of equipment from El Obeid to Darfur, he said, but the regime welcomes both initiatives. Siddiq responded favorably to CDA Fernandez' request for an early response on whether the GOS would welcome a visit by incoming head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Senator John Kerry, and promised an answer within several days to this informal communication. Finally, he offered his strongest assurances that despite the increasingly hostile rhetoric being spouted by demonstrators in front of the US Embassy, the GOS would not allow any harm to come to its personnel. "These orders come all the way from the top, and I can assure you that you are well-protected," he said. End Summary.

¶2. (C) CDA Fernandez and DLO LTC Crockett met with Ministry of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Muttriff Siddiq on January ¶6. CDA raised the issue of landing approval for USG military aircraft transporting vehicles and equipment in support of UNAMID operations from Kigali to El Fasher. Siddiq replied that the GOS has approved such airlifts in the past (in October 2007), welcomes this effort, but requires the final flight details before the airlift can proceed. He urged CDA and DLO to coordinate with UNAMID and the MFA's Peace Department and submit the details as soon as possible. CDA Fernandez also raised the issue of a DOS-sponsored airlift of UNAMID equipment from El Obeid to Darfur, to which Siddiq responded that the GOS has given its initial approval, but that the USG must coordinate with UNAMID and also inform the MFA of the contracted carrier and flight details.

¶3. (C) CDA Fernandez next raised the issue of a potential February visit to Sudan by incoming Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator John Kerry (D-MA). CDA explained that Senate staffers have informally asked for an early response, noting that any last-minute uncertainty about whether the Senator would be granted a visa would result in Sudan being bypassed on his travel itinerary. Siddiq thanked CDA for informing him and remarked that the MFA would "most probably strongly recommend approving this visit" because high level engagement with the US Senate is in the interest of the GOS. Siddiq stated that he would try to have a clear reply for the CDA "in a couple of days."

¶4. (C) CDA Fernandez also expressed concern about the

increasingly hostile rhetoric being spouted by demonstrators outside the Embassy's North Entrance (reftel), and noted that since the demonstrators have effectively shut down this entrance, there is only one available exit route for vehicles departing the Chancery. Siddiq offered his reassurance in the strongest terms that no harm would come to the Embassy. "This is a decision coming all the way from the President," he remarked. "I know the measures being taken, and I can assure you and your people are protected," adding that a large number of the protesters and passerby's were in fact agents of the state security apparatus who would instantly spring into action if there are any real attempts against the Embassy or its personnel. "If anything were to happen, these people would all be at your assistance," he said. Siddiq added that if the GOS felt it could not adequately protect the Embassy, the MFA would unambiguously advise an evacuation.

15. (C) Comment: We anticipate that the GOS will probably provide flight clearances for the DOD airlift of Rwandan troops and equipment next week. The request for clearances coincided with the holidays (Christmas, New Years, and Sudanese Independence Day) when many government offices were closed, which delayed approval. However, the regime appears eager to be cooperative with anything that supports UNAMID deployment. While the ICC announcement may complicate a senatorial visit, many in the GOS clearly see that such a visit is in its interests, as it wants to get off on the right foot with the next US administration. We expect that the government will respond positively to the Codel request, but final determination on the visit will depend on the security and political situation in Sudan following the ICC announcement, expected in late January. The guarantees on

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security are reassuring but the regime continues to play a very dangerous game of seeking to stoke and mold Islamist anger to meet its policy goals. Past history has indicated that this control is not assured. End comment.  
FERNANDEZ